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## **FORMATION OF CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF PROFESSIONS IN SENIOR PRESCHOOL AGE THROUGH PLAY ACTIVITIES**

Changes in Ukraine's education system, oriented towards a competency-based approach, highlight the importance of early formation of children's understanding of various professions and corresponding social roles. Senior preschool age is a period of intensive cognitive development when children show a particular interest in the world around them, including adult professions. Play activities provide an effective means of shaping initial perceptions of professions, enabling children to learn about different social roles and relationships within society.

Researchers studying the formation of preschoolers' understanding of professions emphasize the necessity of applying a competency-based approach. In particular, A. Ovcharenko and I. Kovalova stress the importance of using active methods and play-based technologies in preschool education, allowing knowledge and skills to be reinforced in a way that feels natural for children.

### *The Concept of a Competency-Based Approach in Forming Understanding of Professions*

A competency-based approach in preschool education involves developing children's ability to independently comprehend information about different professions, including the formation of basic knowledge, skills, and value-based attitudes that shape their perception of professional activities. As noted by I. Tkachenko, competence in this context means that a child demonstrates interest in adult professions and can understand how certain social roles are performed and how labor activities take place.

With a competency-based approach, children develop the ability to analyze, compare, and evaluate professions through play situations that simulate real working conditions.

### *Using Play Activities to Develop Understanding of Professions*

One of the most effective methods for shaping children's understanding of professions is organizing role-playing games. Play activities allow children to take on the role of a specific professional, helping them better understand the meaning of work, as well as the characteristics and requirements of different professions. Research by M. Mironchuk and L. Melnyk shows that such games contribute to the development of social competence, helping children realize the role and significance of each profession in society.

### *Examples of Games for Developing Understanding of Professions*

- **"Who Do I Want to Be?"** Children choose a profession that interests them and perform actions or roles associated with that profession. For example, a child may act

as a doctor using toy medical instruments. This helps develop empathy and sociocultural competence.

- **"Professions in the City"** Children are assigned roles of different workers commonly found in a city, such as drivers, shopkeepers, doctors, or police officers. Each child must perform their functions on an imaginary city map, helping them understand the importance of each profession for urban life.

- **"A Workday"** Children perform a series of actions that mimic the real tasks of a particular profession, such as a teacher or a chef. This game helps children understand the features of professional activities, developing their practical skills and social awareness.

#### *The Impact of Play Activities on the Development of Preschoolers' Competencies*

Using play-based methods to develop children's understanding of professions in senior preschool age fosters the development of several key competencies:

- **Cognitive competence:** Children acquire knowledge about the functions and significance of different professions.

- **Social competence:** By taking on the role of an adult professional, children learn behavioral norms and rules necessary for interaction in society.

- **Emotional competence:** Children learn to express emotional reactions to other people's work, developing feelings of empathy and respect for adult labor.

Thus, applying a competency-based approach in play activities for forming children's understanding of professions is an essential step in preparing preschoolers for independent life in society. Games help children develop key social and cognitive competencies necessary for further socialization and successful learning.

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